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ABSTRACT

A course entitled "Strategies for Academic Success," conducted in the Division of Developmental Studies at the University of Georgia, is described. The sample syllabus focuses on self-awareness and can be adapted to meet the needs of other institutions. The course is designed to promote awareness and development of psychological, social, and vocational life skills that facilitate achievement and success in a college or university setting. All students enrolled in the Division of Developmental Studies are required to take the course. The 13 course units are described, noting each one's goal, objective, assignment, and activities. They are as follows: getting acquainted; setting goals and objectives; time management; Chickering's seven vectors of student development; perceptual modality preferences; personality types; career exploration; the core curriculum; reducing stress/promoting wellness; oral communication skills; creativity; campus resources; and taking control. Additional topics covered in the past but not longer included due to lack of time or an overlap in subject matter include getting organized, memory, note taking, reading comprehension, preparing for and taking examinations, and finances. Contains 31 references. (SM)

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A Counseling Course for Developmental Studies Freshmen

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Paper presented at the 13th annual Conference of the National Association of Developmental Education, March, 1989, Cincinnati, OH.

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Running head: Self-Awareness Course

HE 022 366

SAMPLE SYLLABUS

This presentation describes in depth a course entitled "Strategies for Academic Success" which is conducted in the Division of Developmental Studies at the University of Georgia. The course focuses on self awareness and can be adapted to meet the needs of other institutions. Topics covered in the course can be used in freshman orientation courses, workshops, and individual or group counseling sessions. The following syllabus is similiar to that used for the course.

Course Purpose

This course is designed to promote awareness and development of psychological, social, and vocational life skills which facilitate achievement and success in a college or university setting.

Attendance Policy

All students enrolled in the Division of Developmental Studies are required to take this course. Class meets for two hours per week. Attendance is required. More than three absences will result in failure of the course, except under the most extreme conditions (e.g., hospitalization). If you must miss class for any reason, contact the instructor immediately. All missed work must be made up. Assignments will be due upon your return to class.

Course Requirements

1. Completion of all reading assignments whether in the text or handouts.
2. Participation in class discussions.

3. Satisfactory completion of all written assignments, both in class and homework. All homework assignments will be collected the day they are due. Additional homework will be assigned to any student who does not turn in his/her work on time, except in the case of excused absences. Written assignments should be kept in a folder for the course.

4. Satisfactory ("S") scores on all quizzes and the mid-term and final examinations. Scores of 80% and above will be considered satisfactory. Quizzes and examinations will cover both reading assignments and information presented in class. Unsatisfactory ("U") scores on quizzes must be made up by means of alternative assignments which will foster mastery of the material covered on the quiz. Students who fail to earn satisfactory scores on the mid-term and final examinations will be required to re-take the exams until a score of 80 or above is achieved.

Course Outline and Assignments

Unit 1: Getting Acquainted

Goal: To foster involvement in the course by encouraging students to become acquainted with the instructor and one another.

Objective: To know each student's first name by the end of the third class period.

Activities: (1) "Who do you think I am?"; (2) Best and worst summer experiences on 4 x 6 note cards - divide into dyads for introductions; (3) Strategies for remembering names and faces (also serves as an introduction to memory devices); 4) Deep breathing relaxation technique

Assignment: Make a 15 minute appointment with the instructor to get acquainted and to discuss academic and career goals (each student is required to meet individually with the instructor sometime within the first 3 weeks of the quarter).

Unit 2: Setting Goals and Objectives

Goal: To assist students in planning for the future (and thus promote an understanding of their reasons for pursuing a higher education); to motivate students to strive for academic success.

Objective: Each student will establish at least one academic goal and at least two additional life goals, and determine objectives for meeting each goal.

Activities: (1) Goals checklist; (2) Time lines, including goals and objectives; (3) Admissions Committee exercise.

Unit 3: Time Management

Goal: To help students maintain a balance between academic, social, and personal demands on their time.

Objective: Each student will develop a daily, weekly, and quarterly study schedule which is practical and allows for flexibility.

Activity: Play time scheduling game.

Assignments: Develop a daily study schedule for one week, based upon that week's "To Do" list. Monitor planned versus actual activities for the week. Develop a quarterly study calendar.

Unit 4: Chickering's Seven Vectors of Student Development

Goal: To help students understand the ways in which many of the challenges they are experiencing relate to their development as young adults.

Objective: To acquaint students with the developmental tasks of their peer group, and how fulfilling these tasks can temporarily create stress in their lives.

Assignment: Complete the Student Developmental Task and Lifestyle Inventory.

Activities: (1) Divide the class into seven groups of 2 or 3. Have each group present one of the seven vectors and how it relates to their experiences as new college students. (2) Discuss what it will feel like to go home and live under your parents' roof for the first time after moving away from home.

Unit 5: Perceptual Modality Preferences

Goal: To create an awareness of sensory access channels and their relationship to learning in the university classroom.

Objectives: (1) To identify the preferred perceptual modality (ies) of each individual; (2) To determine methods of adapting the student's preferred modality(ies) to the traditional print/aural modes of instruction.

Activities: (1) James and Galbraith's Learning Styles Inventory; (2) Demonstration of perceptual modalities (e.g., print vs. visual: memorize 2 lists of 15 words, given one minute for each list--one list contains abstract terms, the other consists of nouns which are easily visualized; haptic: reconstruct models with Legos or Tinker Toys; kinesthetic: learn a sentence in American sign language), (3) Discussion of adaptations of learning styles (e.g., study groups for interactive students; mapping and Cornell format of note taking for visual students)

Assignments: (1) Write a 100 to 200 word paper describing your preferred perceptual modality(ies) and how you can adapt; (2) Write one paragraph on how your preferred perceptual modality(ies) will be advantageous to you in the world of work.

Unit 6: Personality Types

Goal: To acquaint students with how their Jungian personality type relates to academic performance, career choice, and interpersonal communications.

Objective: Each student will determine his/her personality type through administration of the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator.

Activities: (1) Complete MBTI in class. (2) Upon return of scored instruments provide group interpretation of results, including relationship to learning, career choice, and majors at the University of Georgia. (3) Divide into small groups to complete a task (e.g., survival kit exercise); allow time for students to guess/discuss types within their small group.

Assignment: Write one paragraph about your Jungian personality type as it relates to your choice of major and/or career. If you are undecided, what are some careers which would be compatible with your personality type?

Unit 7: Career Exploration

Goal: To assist students in examining their skills, values, and lifestyle preferences in order to make a realistic career choice.

Objective: If possible, to determine a major field of study at the University of Georgia, or at least the school/college and type of degree to be pursued (e.g., A. B.,B.S.,or B.F.A.).

Assignment: Complete the Self-Directed Search to determine Holland code preferences.

Activities: (1) Values exercise or auction; (2) Checklist relating Holland code to majors at UGA; (3) Demonstration of opportunities for computerized career exploration.

Unit 8: The Core Curriculum

Goal: To prepare students to be knowledgeable participants in the advising and registration process.

Objective: Each student will learn how to interpret the core curriculum for his/her degree program.

Activity: In depth discussion of graduation requirements for all students; divide into small groups by school or college to discuss core curriculum for various degree programs.

Assignments: Develop a two year plan of courses to be taken each quarter to meet core curriculum requirements. Sign up for a pre-registration advising appointment.

Unit 9: Reducing Stress/Promoting Wellness

Goal: To help students reduce or adapt to stress, and when possible eliminate sources of stress over which they can exert control.

Objectives: (1) To assist students in identifying sources of stress which they can eliminate through time management, changing eating and sleeping habits, enhancing communication skills, etc.; (2) To identify students suffering from academic anxiety; (3) To teach a variety of relaxation techniques.

Assignments: Complete the Developmental Inventory of Sources of Stress, the Spielberger Test Attitude Inventory, and the Mathematics Anxiety (or Confidence) Scale of the Fennema-Sherman Mathematics Attitude Scales or the Math Anxiety Rating Scale (MARS).

Activities: (1) Small group presentations on health and wellness issues; (2) Relaxation techniques introduced throughout the quarter: progressive muscle relaxation, deep muscle relaxation, mental imagery, creating your own peaceful scene, various quick techniques such as use of

cue words, breathing techniques, focused attention; (3) Discussion of academic anxiety and systematic desensitization and other treatment techniques (stimulus for referral).

Unit 10: Oral Communication Skills

Goal: To enhance opportunities for success in all aspects of the student's life by improving oral communication skills and helping students identify their feelings.

Objectives: (1) To help students understand the difference between "you" messages and "I" messages; (2) To teach assertive behavior as an alternative to passive and/or aggressive behavior; (3) To demonstrate small group roles and how they facilitate or hinder communication.

Activities: (1) Role plays of passive, aggressive, and assertive behaviors; (2) Fish bowl type exercise to examine small group roles, or divide into several small groups.

Assignments: (1) Worksheet - turning "I" messages into "you" messages; (2) Describe situation in which you would like to be more assertive. List the steps you will take to respond to this situation assertively. What will you say? What will you do? Now follow your own advice. What happened? How do you feel about it?

Unit 11: Creativity

Goal: To help students realize their creative potential.

Objective: Each student will be able to describe a way in which he/she is creative.

Assignment: (1) Prepare a 3 minute speech on an interest or hobby. Provide at least one visual aid. (2) Write a paragraph describing a way in which you used your creativity to solve a problem, enjoy an activity, or just to relax.

Activitives: (1) Scamper; (2) Speeches; (3) Let class divide itself into small groups for presentations on issues of concern for college students, e.g. substance abuse, AIDS, birth control, campus policies on drinking and parties, teen age suicide, sexism, racism, etc., and allow the presentations to go in whatever direction the students wish (link to Unit 8); or (4) Ask each group to design and present a game show which will provide information on a campus resource, e.g. Student Activities Office, Counseling and Testing, bus service, library, etc. (See Unit 12).

Unit 12: Campus Resources

Goal: To acquaint students with available resources.

Objective: Each student will be informed regarding the location and basic services provided by a wide variety of offices on the university campus.

Activities: Make a brief presentation and distribute literature on a different resource at the end of each class period or try activity suggested in Unit 11.

Assignment: Brainstorm ideas of free (i.e. no cost) activities you can do for fun without leaving campus. Strive for at least 10 activities.

Unit 13: Taking Control

Goal: To encourage students to take control of their lives.

Objective: Through use of metacognition, to teach students to examine how they attribute their successes and failures.

Activity: Have students predict their grades and whether they will exit each of their Developmental Studies courses. Then have them write why or why not.

Additional Topics

The following topics have been covered in the past but are no longer included due to lack of time or an overlap in subject matter with the Developmental Studies reading courses. However, under other circumstances they would easily be incorporated into the course.

Getting organized: Class materials, study areas, etc.
Memory: Mnemonic devices, 7 ± 2, etc.
Note taking: Cornell format, mapping
Reading comprehension: SQ3R
Preparing for and taking examinations:
- Predicting exam questions
- Techniques for multiple choice/essay exams
- Following directions

Finances: The cost of a UGA education, maintaining a budget

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